

What should I do when my children want a pet?

Pets are a very special and important part of many families. They also require much attention and responsibility. Take your time when deciding to get a pet and make sure that your family can give a pet everything that they will need and that the pet will be safe for your family. Discuss all of the responsibilities with your children before deciding to get a family pet. This will ensure that your children understand these responsibilities and agree to participate in caring for their pet before a pet arrives at your home.

Show your children how to feed, water and care for their pet several times before expecting them to care for the pet on their own. Post a list of “pet responsibilities” and gently remind them when it is time to care for their pet.

Taking care of the family pet can be a fun time for your children. For example, take a Frisbee outside and have your child play catch for awhile or have the family take the dog for a walk together. This will promote physical exercise for your children and their pet.

Create a fun chart with your child to outline the different responsibilities required in caring for their pet. Use stars and stickers to identify when each responsibility is complete and place it on the refrigerator. This will remind your children to complete their chores and show them that you are proud when they act responsibly.